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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/10/2020

TAGS: PREL PGOV PINR KISL KWBG KPAL IS LY

SUBJECT: SAIF AL-ISLAM AL-QADHAFI'S PALESTINIAN ADVENTURISM

REF: TRIPOLI 110

CLASSIFIED BY: Gene A. Cretz, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy Tripoli, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: In a nod to his father's dream to serve as grand regional mediator, Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi appears to be increasingly interested in helping to broker reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas, possibly in hopes of achieving a compromise prior to the Libyan-hosted Arab League Summit in March. One of Saif's close advisors and confidantes recently told us that Saif believes Libya has the best chance to forge a compromise between the Palestinian parties due to its "neutrality," and because of that, had been approached personally by Khaled Mish'al to intervene. Mish'al has also reportedly asked Saif to serve as a backchannel interlocutor between Hamas and the USG. The advisor confirmed that the Libyan government was pursuing a second track to influence Palestinian reunification, via the son of one of Muammar al-Qadhafi's fellow "free officers." While Saif has worked in the past to negotiate a compromise between the Israelis and the Palestinians on the release of Gilad Shalit, his current efforts focus exclusively on the Palestinian account. End Summary.

¶2. (S/NF) Mohamed Ismail, chief of staff to Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi recently discussed with P/E chief the latter's involvement in Palestinian reconciliation efforts, which involved two visits by Hamas Political Chief Khaled Mish'al to Tripoli and a meeting in Spain between Saif and Mohammed Dahlan, Fatah Central Committee member and former Security Chief in Gaza. Ismail stressed that his boss was acting strictly in his capacity as head of the Qadhafi International Charity and Development Foundation (QDF), not on behalf of the Libyan government. According to the advisor, Mish'al had approached Saif to work with him to negotiate a compromise with Dahlan, which would possibly involve the USG. He characterized Dahlan as "more reasonable" than PA President Mahmoud Abbas, whom he believed was a "weak figurehead, without authority," and an obstacle to reconciliation efforts.

¶3. (S/NF) While Saif was working toward a compromise in time to announce the achievement at the upcoming Arab League Summit, which Tripoli will host in March (reftel), he was finding the Palestinians "stubborn" and difficult to advise. Ismail opined that Egypt was complicating matters through its ardent support for Fatah and hatred of Hamas. "They'll never allow unity," he remarked. Nevertheless, Saif believes that Libya stands a better chance than other "Arab brothers" to broker reconciliation, given its "neutral" position on matters. Ismail also claimed that Saif had attempted to mediate between Israel and the Palestinians on the release of Gilad Shalit, but he had not achieved much success and had not attempted to engage on that matter since last October. Ismail suggested that Saif serve as a liaison for informal communication between Hamas and

the USG, claiming that Mish'al had asked Saif to approach the USG on that issue.

¶4. (S/NF) Ismail refuted a January 24 report in Israel's "Haaretz" claiming that "a group of four or five" Libyans had been denied entry into Ramallah for talks with senior Fatah officials in late December. He said that Khaled al-Humeidi, Head of the quasi-governmental International Organization for Peace, Care, and Relief in Libya and an aide to Muammar al-Qadhafi, had led the delegation, and that Humeidi, son of one of the five "free officers" that led Muammar al-Qadhafi's 1969 coup, and his buddies went to Ramallah and met with the officials. The advisor claimed that Humeidi's efforts were independent of Saif's, potentially at the behest of the Libyan leader. Humeidi's organizations has also reportedly provided aid to Palestinians in Gaza.

¶5. (S/NF) Comment: Saif's adventurism among the Palestinians is not new -- he has made public statements on Israeli-Palestinian issues in the past -- and is reminiscent of his father's attempts to mediate in conflicts across the region and on the continent. His efforts are all the more critical given the need for some Qadhafi family achievement after the AU debacle and in light of the upcoming Arab summit here. End comment.

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